

# Choosing Hardware

Find your way  
in the metal maze.

BOB SAYDLOWSKI

**SELECTING** the right hardware for your drum needs is just as critical as selecting the right drums. The musical style you play will have bearing on the hardware strength, height, and so on. Transportation is another important consideration. Will it be packed in ATA road cases, or crammed in a station wagon with the rest of the band's equipment? Let's journey through the Wonderful Land of Chrome Tubing.

## Cymbal Stands

The difference between a boom stand and a straight stand is of course, the boom allows the stand base to be positioned away from the kit, while the cymbal can still be brought in close. In most cases, only a short boom arm is needed. Don't pay extra for a long boom if you're not going to use all its length. Long booms are useful for elevating china cymbals up and above your kit, or any where you need the added height or extension. For general work, single-braced stands will do fine, unless you have large, heavy cymbals to mount, or need an acute angle or a lot of height. Then a double-braced tripod base is the better choice for added strength and stability.

If you're going to be tearing your stands completely down, tube by tube, for packing, then memory rings are always a good idea. I haven't seen too many cymbal stands with memory fittings, but fear not, as you can always devise your own using hose clamps. You can also color-code the sections for faster assembly and exact height by using different colored tape on the pipes, as well as on the tripod base to memorize leg spread.

There are two basic types of cymbal tilters: One has ratchet teeth, the other is a toothless ring tilter (as pioneered by Pearl). I prefer the latter, since angles can be set within millimeters. Ratchet-style tilters have pre-designated locations where the teeth interlock, even the finely-spaced ones. Therefore, you may not be able to get the precise angle you want.

## Snare Stands

Most snare stands rely on a basket design to hold the drum. (The older ones used three flat arms.) Angles are set by a flat hinge tilter, or a ball and cage-type system. The ball does provide more diverse angles in all directions. If you're playing a deep rock drum (like a 7 or 8-inch depth), it's important that the

stand will go low enough to comfortably place the drum in front of you. (Batter head at your waist is best.) Snare stands are available in single or double braced tripod bases. It's wise to note whether you need a slim spreading base to make room for various pedals underneath. The stand you decide on should be stable, and not tip over or rock while playing.

As with other stands, hi-hats are either single or double braced for personal requirements. Drum Workshop makes a hi-hat with a base that can be rotated so the legs don't get in the way of any other pedals and stands on the floor. Currently in vogue are remote cable-operated hi-hats (from D.W., Tama, Pearl, Yamaha, and others). These stands allow

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## Hi-Hat Stands

There are many different hi-hat stands on the market, but they all perform the same function. Methods of spring tension vary, though. Some have a single inner spring, some have double outer springs, while others have encased compression springs. When choosing a hi-hat, try the various spring systems, with the cymbals mounted, and determine which feels best to you. Don't buy a certain stand just because your favorite drummer uses it. A hi-hat pedal is as personal as a bass drum pedal, a cymbal setup, sticks, etc. Everyone has a different touch.

Watch for any binding of the pull rod; it should be smooth-acting throughout. Also, listen for any spring rod or pedal noise, as they could cause problems when close miking, in addition to being just plain bothersome. In general, the stand should react accurately with your foot and not feel as if you're working against it.

Pedal-to-rod linkage can be steel, strap, chain, or plastic. It's best to stay with one of the more solid linkages to prevent pedal "kickback." A lightweight linkage is superior, I believe, because a heavier one will pull the top cymbal down a bit.

the hi-hat cymbals to be separated from the bottom body of the stand by a steel cable connected to the cymbal pull rod and the pedalboard drive. A remote hi-hat allows placement of the cymbals anywhere on your drumkit (in front, on the right side, etc.) with a stand adaptor. Then you're no longer tied down to playing hi-hat next to your snare, cross-handed.

A few companies like Tama and Latin Percussion are making auxiliary hi-hat mounts which set the cymbals in a permanently closed position. Again, these are designed to mount off a cymbal stand, allowing placement anywhere. Double bass players find these invaluable as they can still have closed hi-hats to ride on, while their two feet are busy with the bass drums. Also, some drummers (myself included) use an auxiliary hat to hold a second pair of hi-hat cymbals, usually a smaller size.

Looks like we've run out of space this month. Next time, I'll continue with bass drum pedals, tom stands, thrones, and rack systems.

*Bob Saydowski, Jr. writes product reviews for Modern Drummer, lives on the East Coast, and is ready to tour on a moment's notice.*



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